


Malling Rural District Council.

REPORT
OF THE
Health of the District,
FOR THE YEAR 1900.

MAIDSTONE:

Young and Cooper, Printers, Bank Street.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2017 with funding from
Wellcome Library

<https://archive.org/details/b29782284>

To the Malling Rural District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit to you my Report for the year 1900.

The District under my care Embraces :—

	Census, 1881.		Census, 1891.
Acres.....	38,527	.....	38,527.
Inhabited Houses	3,171	.....	4,849.
Population	22,660	.....	24,747.
Population estimated to the middle of 1900, 26,782.			

This estimate is based on the supposition that the population increases at the same rate as it did between 1881 and 1891, it will however probably be found that the new Census will give a higher rate of increase owing to the flourishing state of the cement trade and the consequent influx of cement labourers with their families.

The *Births* registered during the year numbered 653, of these 338 were males and 315 females. The birth rate for the year is 24·38 per 1000 of the estimated population. The rates for the preceding 3 years, 1897, 1898 and 1899, being respectively 25·9, 26·13 and 25·57. This year's rate is the lowest for some time past.

The *Deaths* registered during the year numbered 385, giving a death rate per 1,000 of the estimated population of 14·37, the rates for the preceding 3 years, 1897, 1898 and 1899, being respectively 12·91, 15·0 and 19·31. The average rate for the past 8 years is 14·94.

The deaths from the principal *Zymotic* diseases numbered 49, giving a general Zymotic death rate of 1·83 per 1,000 of the estimated population for the preceding 3 years, 1897, 1898 and 1899 the rate was respectively 1·34, 1·93 and 1·43.

There occurred from	{	Diphtheria	7 deaths.
		Typhoid Fever	1 „
		Measles	24 „
		Diarrhœa	9 } 17 „
		Enteritis	8 }

Under the Act for the *Compulsory Notification of Infectious Diseases*, there were reported 199 cases which considering the continued presence of a mild and insidious form of Scarlet Fever may be considered satisfactory.

The 199 included	{	94	cases of Scarlet Fever.
		55	„ Diphtheria.
		8	„ Typhoid Fever.
		1	„ Continued Fever.
		41	„ Erysipelas.

Scarlet Fever has been prevalent throughout the year, though the number reported is smaller than in 1899. The type has continued of the mildest, and no death has occurred amongst the 94 patients. Snodland has been the parish most affected, 28 cases occurring there, in East Peckham there have been 18 cases, in West Malling, 10; Offham, 10; Burham, 8; East Malling, 8; Trosley, 4; Ditton, 3; Aylesford, 3; and Ightham, 2.

There is no doubt that owing to the mild nature of many cases a considerable number of children got through the disease without the knowledge of any responsible person, and unless the trouble be detected these cases create fresh centres of infection, in addition to this German Measles has been very prevalent in many places and in some instances it has proved difficult to distinguish between the diseases in their early stages.

Diphtheria has been less general this year, 55 cases being reported as against 83 last year, and 85 in 1897. Snodland was the parish most affected, 18 cases being notified, East Malling had 11 cases; Ditton, 7; Burham, 4; East Peckham, 3; Eccles, Aylesford, Mereworth and Ryarsh, 2 each, Wouldham, Addington and West Malling, 1 each.

8 cases of *Typhoid Fever* were reported, the cases were scattered and no parish had more than a single instance of the disease. In 3 instances the patients came into the district with the disease already developing, leaving only 5 to be accounted for and of the 5 no two had any cause in common, neither did the disease in any instance spread beyond the individual first affected. The only case needing special comment is that which occurred at Ightham in August and to this reference is made later.

Before leaving the subject of Infectious Diseases I would draw your attention to the satisfactory position occupied by Wouldham this year. Excluding 2 cases of Erysipelas there has been reported 1 case of Diphtheria in January and 1 of Typhoid Fever in November. This last case was very mild and no local cause for the disease was discovered. Last year out of a total of 231 cases of Infectious Disease Wouldham reported 47 cases and the year before saw the troublesome Epidemic of Typhoid Fever there. This year on the other hand out of a total of 158, Wouldham reports only 2 cases, these figures exclude Erysipelas. It is of course unreasonable to suppose this comparative immunity will last, at any rate to the same degree,

yet without doubt the improvement is largely to be attributed to the excellent system of scavenging carried out there coupled with the more general use of the Mid-Kent Water Company's Water.

Mereworth again is much improved in that part where systematic scavenging has been carried out, and any Member of the Council interested in the matter would be well repaid by a visit to that part between Mereworth Cross and the Schools which used to be the most insanitary part of the Village and which now compares very favourably with the rest. Here the system is a voluntary one and so far it has answered its purpose.

Ightham is an outlying corner of your district that from its situation is particularly difficult to deal with. A case of *Typhoid Fever* occurred there in August which was abundantly accounted for by local conditions, with this exception the parish has been very free from infectious disease. Nevertheless the condition of the village is such that an outbreak might at any time occur and prove serious. To adopt a general system of drainage, the main pipes to follow the course of the stream or gully known as "The Busty," would no doubt be the best scheme, but it would prove expensive, and would press hardly on those who at considerable cost to themselves have already done their best to dispose of their sewage and refuse by other methods. The difficulty could, I think, be most conveniently dealt with by a scheme somewhat similar to that adopted at Mereworth, briefly this would be to scavenge those parts of the village that are incapable of being otherwise dealt with except at great expense, and to distribute the cost amongst those benefitted. I advise that such a scheme as this be first tried, it would entail comparatively little outlay and would probably prevent greater expense and trouble. The laying-on of the Company's water will, without doubt, prove a boon.

During the year three cottages in Mereworth village were condemned as unfit for human habitation, and were closed in due course.

It will be necessary shortly to condemn certain cottages in the Back Street of West Malling; the street as a whole, with its yards and alleys, is in a very insanitary condition, and by far the most satisfactory plan would be to pull down the whole, widen the street, and rebuild; the land would lend itself well to such an arrangement. There is, unfortunately, no means of enforcing this in a rural district, under the circumstances, it would, however, be well to ascertain from owners if an amicable arrangement could not be come to before such cottages as are unfit for human habitation are condemned.

In September I called your especial attention to the neglect of proper precautions for preventing the spread of Diphtheria on the part

of a dairyman named Wray at Snodland; also to the disgraceful housing of certain hop-pickers at Welfare's Farm, East Peckham, which resulted in an outbreak of diphtheria there.

The Mid-Kent Water Co. continues to supply pure water as shown by the monthly analysis. A great advance has been made by carrying the mains in several new directions; Upper Birling, Ryarsh, Addington, Ightham, Watlingbury, and Mereworth are now all within the area of supply.

I give a table supplied by the Secretary of the Company showing the number of houses receiving water, and the progress made during the year.

	Snodland and Birling.	West Malling and Leybourne.	East Malling and Ditton.	Wouldham, Burham and Eccles.	Ryarsh and Addington.	Ightham.	Watlingbury and Mereworth.	Total.
Dec. 31st, 1900	697	345	389	522	26	58	49	2086
Dec. 31st, 1899	644	298	369	500	—	—	—	1811
Increase	53	47	20	22	26	58	49	275

The number of cases admitted to the Isolation Hospital during the year was 87, as against 59, 64 and 126 in '97, '98 and '99 respectively. These included 55 cases of Scarlet Fever and 32 cases of Diphtheria.

The average stay in Hospital of Scarlet Fever patients was 49 days, that of Diphtheria patients 27 days.

There occurred 6 deaths, all from Diphtheria; in 5 out of the 6 cases death occurred within 48 hours of admission. The mortality from Diphtheria was therefore bad when compared with previous years, it being this year 18·7 per cent. The mortality of the whole Hospital was nearly 7 per cent.

Appended is the report of your Sanitary Inspector.

Last year I reported that your Inspector's time was very fully occupied owing to the increasing population and the yearly increasing requirements of Sanitary Science; I am consequently frequently without his assistance. I am still of opinion that a horse and cart is essential to enable him to get through his own work and to render me proper assistance.

I have the honour to remain, Gentleman,

Your obedient servant,

ARTHUR H. ROBERTS.

ST. LEONARDS STREET,

WEST MALLING,

February 12th, 1901.

Dr. A. H. Roberts,

Medical Officer of Health,

Malling Rural District Council.

Dear Sir,

I beg to submit the following particulars of my work as Inspector of Nuisances, Surveyor of Buildings, Inspector of Canal Boats, and Inspector under the Dairies and Cowsheds Order, to the Malling Rural District Council, during the year 1900.

NUISANCES.—

Accumulation of refuse	..	..	..	..	68
Cesspools overflowing	..	..	..	..	43
Drains blocked	..	..	..	..	60
Defective or insufficient drainage	..	..	..	..	120
Defective roofs and gutters	..	..	..	..	63
Dangerous wells	..	..	..	..	6
Dirty dairies	..	..	..	..	0
Dirty cowsheds	..	..	..	..	3
Dirty bakehouses	..	..	..	..	1
Defective paving	..	..	..	..	35
Filthy dwellings	..	..	..	..	6
Houses unfit for human habitation	..	..	..	..	5
Ill-constructed cesspools	..	..	..	..	26
Ill-constructed privies	..	..	..	..	61
Insufficient W.C.'s	..	..	..	..	48
Keeping animals so as to be a nuisance	..	..	..	..	14
Overcrowding	..	..	..	..	2
Overflowing privies	..	..	..	..	57
Total	..	..	..	..	618

The nuisances enumerated have in most cases been abated, the exceptions being the paving of yards to cottages at Aylesford, which has been delayed waiting more favourable weather.

In accordance with instructions proceedings were taken:—

Closing of three cottages at Mereworth as unfit for human habitation; the Magistrates made necessary order.

Also order was made for the abatement of nuisance arising from earth closets, ashpits, and cesspool, to four cottages, East Malling.

The Scavenging at Wouldham is working very satisfactorily, and has greatly improved the sanitary condition of the village, the number of notifiable diseases being greatly reduced.

HOP-PICKERS' DWELLINGS.—

During the season I inspected and re-inspected the hoppers' huts and tents in the district, and found the accommodation with one exception fairly good, and the proceedings taken in the previous year for the protection of the food supply had had a good effect, insomuch that a much better quality was provided this year.

NEW STREETS AND BUILDINGS.--

During the year the Council approved of the plans for the following buildings and additions:—32 houses, 11 additions to houses, 4 houses and shops, 2 additions to shops, 1 warehouse, 1 farm buildings, 1 parish room, 1 drill hall, 1 billiard room, 1 store room, and 2 stables.

FLUSHING TANKS.—

The flushing system is greatly improving the condition of the sewers at Snodland, and the owners of cottage property are greatly assisting by providing flushing cisterns and water supply to the W.C.'s, thus making them sufficient Water Closets.

COWSHEDS AND DAIRIES.—

I have inspected and re-inspected the dairies and cowsheds in the district during the year, and have found the dairies clean and well kept; the cowsheds I have had occasion to call upon the cowkeepers to limewhite sheds, which has been done without being necessary to serve statutory notices, the cows during most part of the year being turned out in the fields.

CANAL BOATS.—

During the year I have inspected 16 canal boats, and found two contraventions of the Canal Boats Acts, these have both been remedied. There is great difficulty in making many inspections, for directly the boats are moored alongside the wharf the cabins are locked and no one left in charge.

Yours faithfully,

CHARLES SOUTER,

Inspector of Nuisances, Surveyor of Buildings, &c.